

Reacting to the Contestation of Trade Policy in the Transatlantic Area

Call for contributors and papers for workshops

Dirk De Bièvre, *University of Antwerp*, dirk.debievre@uantwerpen.be

Andreas Dür, *University of Salzburg*, andreas.duer@sbg.ac.at

funded by the Jean Monnet Network on Transatlantic Trade Politics, coordinated by Achim Hurrelmann at Carleton University Ottawa

<https://carleton.ca/tradenetwork/>

With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Over the past decade, trade policy has been increasingly contested in the transatlantic area. Within the EU, agreements such as the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) have faced broad public opposition (De Bièvre 2018; De Bièvre and Poletti 2020; Dür and Mateo 2014). Also beyond the EU, trade policy has become contested (e.g. Kay and Evans 2018). In 2016, for example, Donald Trump decided to focus part of his presidential campaign on trade, leading to increased contestation of the Transpacific Partnership in the United States. Public opposition to parts of the trade policy agenda is part of a general trend towards the contestation of international cooperation (De Vries et al. 2021; Johansson-Nogués et al. 2020).

Much research has looked at the causes of this contestation, trying to sort out the causal interrelationship between societal mobilisation, political entrepreneurship and institutional capacity. Contestation is most likely to occur when political entrepreneurs such as interest groups, politicians, political parties and mass media mobilize the public, but only when they find the institutional means and political opportunity structures to do so.

While accounting for causes of contestation of trade policy is thus advancing apace, much less attention has been paid to the **consequences of this contestation**. It has remained underexplored how actors such as governments, parliaments, business actors, civil society groups, labour unions, and, in the case of the EU, also the European Commission and the European Parliament react to the contestation of trade policy. Some of these actors may also be driving the contestation of trade policy; but here we are interested in analysing their responses to the contestation driven by other actors.

For our workshop, **we thus look for papers that analyse the reaction of these actors or actor types to the contestation of trade policy** in the transatlantic area. E.g. do governments respond to contestation by making trade policy more transparent or through policy change? Do business actors show a greater reliance on outside lobbying when trade policy is contested or do they retreat? In the EU, do member state governments react by defending EU trade policy or by blaming the EU? The resulting papers should be analytic rather than descriptive. That is, they should strive for **generic explanations of how and why different actors react to contestation**. They can rely on variation over time, across agreements, across sectors (as contestation generally tends to focus on only some issues

included in trade agreements), or within these actors (e.g. one member state government reacting differently than another) to test arguments about the consequences of contestation.

The provisional **thematic range** of the workshops covers the reaction by the following actors to the contestation of trade policy:

- Governments
- Parliaments
- Business actors
- Civil society groups
- Labour unions
- European Commission
- European Parliament

We are, however, open to further suggestions, as long as papers speak to the overall theme of how actors react to the contestation of trade policy in the transatlantic area.

The expected **timeline** is as follows:

- (1) Deadline abstract proposals (250-500 words): Fri 14 May 2021; to be sent scott.hamilton@uantwerpen.be.
- (2) Paper, 5-10 page draft: Fri 29 Oct 2021
- (3) **Workshop 1 (Antwerp)**: 1st half of Nov 2021
- (4) Paper, full version: Fri 29 April 2022
- (5) **Workshop 2 (Salzburg)**: May 2022
- (6) Submission of papers as a special issue

Whether we will meet for the first workshop in Antwerp or virtually depends on the further development of the Covid-19 pandemic. Eventual travel and accommodation costs for authors of selected papers will be covered. We expect papers that are submitted to be available for inclusion in a special issue.

Bibliography

De Bièvre, Dirk. 2018. "The paradox of weakness in European trade policy: Contestation and resilience in CETA and TTIP negotiations." *The International Spectator* 53(3): 70–85.

De Bièvre, Dirk and Arlo Poletti. 2020. "Towards Explaining Varying Degrees of Politicization of EU Trade Agreement Negotiations." *Politics and Governance* 8(1): 243–253.

De Vries, Catherine E., Sara B. Hobolt, and Stefanie Walter. 2021. "Politicizing International Cooperation: The Mass Public, Political Entrepreneurs, and Political Opportunity Structures." *International Organization* forthcoming.

Dür, Andreas, and Gemma Mateo. 2014. "Public Opinion and Interest Group Influence: How Citizen Groups Derailed the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement." *Journal of European Public Policy* 21(8): 1199–1217.

Johansson-Nogués, Elisabeth, Martijn C. Vlaskamp, and Esther Barbé. eds. 2020. *European Union Contested*. Cham: Springer.

Kay, Tamara, and R. L. Evans. 2018. *Trade Battles: Activism and the Politicization of International Trade Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.